

## **Post-Event Summary Report**

**Name of the Event:** Lower Savannah Regional White House Conference on Aging Forum      **Date of the Event:** March 22, 2005

**Location of the Event:** Orangeburg County Council on Aging  
2570 St. Matthews Road, Orangeburg, SC 29115

**Number of Persons Attending:** 26 registered participants

**Sponsoring Organization:** Lower Savannah Area Agency on Aging and the  
Orangeburg County Council on Aging

**Contact Name:** Linda H. Holmes

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Please follow this format for each priority area, with the most important listed first.

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### **Priority Issue #1:**

Seniors in the primarily rural Lower Savannah Region of South Carolina have difficulty accessing health care services to maintain or improve their overall health. Very often, medical services are unavailable.

#### **Barriers:**

- 1) Limited transportation to medical appointments of all economic levels.
- 2) High cost of prescription drugs and confusion about the prescription drug cards.
- 3) Lack of knowledge about health services and programs
- 4) Lack of health education for disease prevention/health promotion, and good nutrition.
- 5) Lack of physicians and specialists to meet the demand in rural communities due to high malpractice insurance cost.
- 6) Lack of available assistance to seniors for medication management due to liability concerns.

#### **Proposed Solutions:**

- 1) Partnerships with agencies that provide transportation at affordable costs
- 2) Increase education programs for seniors through agencies and the faith based organizations
- 3) Increase health promotion/disease prevention education
- 4) Tort Reform/controls on medical malpractice insurance premiums
- 5) Increase knowledge and assistance for seniors in need of medication management
- 6) Increase knowledge to the communities about Medicare Part D and other prescription drug assistance programs that are available
- 7) Seniors should have the same Health Care as our Native Americans

Linda H. Holmes

Lower Savannah Council of Governments/Area Agency on Aging (803) 649-7981

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### **Priority Issue #2:**

Transportation services in the Lower Savannah Region are not available, affordable, reliable, or accessible to seniors in the rural and urban areas.

#### **Barriers:**

- 1) Limited access to transportation for appointments, drug stores, grocery shopping, etc. that is affordable.
- 2) Transportation for medical appointments is available only for the Medicaid recipients.
- 3) Seniors live in rural isolated areas.
- 4) Insurance/liability for transportation prevents other agencies from renting their vans to transport seniors.
- 5) Lack of transportation programs where people can pay an affordable fare for transportation

#### **Proposed Solutions:**

- 1) Involve the faith-based communities to assist with transportation needs during the week when church vans and busses are not being used.
- 2) Develop public transportation programs with affordable fares
- 3) Address rules/regulations and liability issues that prevent organizations from partnering
- 4) Address the needs of the "Haves" and "Have Nots" to help close this gap.

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### **Priority Issue #3:**

Unpaid family caregivers are faced with financial challenges and their own life is "put on hold".

#### **Barriers:**

- 1) Lack of resources to pay for respite care, personal care, etc.
- 2) Inability to work outside of the home and continue to provide full time care for a loved one
- 3) Lack of trained workers for in-home services such as respite care, personal care, etc.
- 4) Lack of Adult Day Care services

#### **Proposed Solutions:**

- 1) Provide increased training and support for caregivers.
- 2) Encourage agencies and/or private companies to provide adult day services
- 3) Provide more community based funded respite programs
- 4) Provide tax incentives for caregivers

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

To create more funding sources for senior services including more home/community based programs for in-home care.

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### **Priority Issue #4:**

Long term care (LTC) and a continuum of supportive services is inadequate to meet the needs of the growing older adult population.

#### **Barriers:**

- 1) High cost of long-term care and medications
- 2) Complicated Medicaid eligibility criteria for the applicant
- 3) Many seniors are afraid of the Estate Recovery Law and refuse services under Medicaid
- 4) Lack of choices in rural areas

### **Proposed Solutions:**

- 1) Increase the recognition of workers in home care programs and LTC facilities
- 2) Educate the public about costs, services and entry points for LTC
- 3) Education programs about the Estate Recovery Law
- 4) Encourage financial planning for the future

### **Recommendation:**

There should be an adequate choice of home and community based services, assisted living facilities and nursing homes so that consumers have choices, including the rural areas. Consumers should have access to affordable medications to prevent deterioration of their physical and mental conditions.

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### **Priority Issue #5:**

Prevention of financial fraud, abuse, and exploitation

#### **Barriers:**

- 1) Need more education and awareness "Watch Dog" programs to have neighbors helping neighbors in the prevention of fraud and abuse
- 2) Lack of Public Guardianship programs to provide for the needs of seniors who have no involved family members
- 3) Isolation and loneliness of seniors

### **Proposed Solutions:**

- 1) Involve the faith-based communities to assist members of their own congregations
- 2) Develop a public guardianship program for adults in the State of South Carolina.
- 3) Address telephone scams, and other scams that seem to prey on seniors

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